

Scholarship Committee - Virtual Meeting #2

For this virtual meeting, I'd like to focus on a revision to the scholarship eligibility requirements and language clarifications to the scholarship application and web page. Below are those proposed changes for your review. Please read each proposed change (and its pros and cons) and Reply All with your vote and comments, if any. If the majority of responding committee members vote "yes" to make the changes below, I will submit the recommendations to VLA's Executive Council. If they approve the changes, they will have VLA Council vote on the changes at the September VLA Council meeting and the changes will then be ready for the 2019 scholarship cycle.

To make it easier to visualize these changes, I've attached a copy of the the 2019 scholarship application and also a document containing the text of the scholarship web page. On both documents, the language to be removed is in red, and the language to be added is in green.

1. Scholarship Eligibility Proposed Change (Yes or No)

Remove "pending application for admission" and make acceptance into an ALA-accredited institution the minimum standard one must meet to apply for the scholarship to prevent a scenario where a candidate with a pending application is chosen as a winner, but doesn't get accepted in grad school.

Pros: This will eliminate any potentially embarrassing situations in the future where a candidate with a pending application to graduate school gets chosen as a scholarship winner, and then is not accepted into their graduate program. Potential scholarship applicants with pending graduate school applications will still have plenty of time to apply for a scholarship once they are accepted into their program.

Cons: This could very slightly lower our potential pool of scholarship applicants.

2. Language clarification on the Scholarship application and on the scholarship web page to clarify eligible graduate degrees (Yes or No)

To prevent confusion amongst some potential candidates, when appropriate, add a parenthetical (MLS, MLIS, MSLIS, MSIS) when

referencing Master of Library Science Degree on the scholarship application and scholarship web page, since many library schools are expanding or changing the names of their programs from the traditional "MLS."

Pros: This could expand our pool of candidates as making this change should eliminate confusion from potential candidates about who is eligible to apply for the VLA scholarship.

Cons: It could make the application and website look slightly wordier.

3. Revise language on the scholarship application to clarify eligible candidates (Yes or No)

Revise application and web page to clarify that not just new MLS students are eligible to apply, but also those students are already in the midst of their studies.

Pros: This could expand our pool of candidates as making this change should eliminate confusion from potential candidates about who is eligible to apply for the VLA scholarship.

Cons: None.

I'd appreciate your responses by the close of the business day next Friday (June 22nd). Thanks for all your help!

Best,
Mike

Committee Votes

Committee Member	1. Scholarship Eligibility Change	2. Language clarification on Scholarship application & web page to clarify eligible graduate degrees	3. Revise language on the scholarship application to clarify eligible candidates
Michael Hibben	Yes	Yes	Yes
Malia Willey	Yes	Yes	Yes
Kathy A. Clevenger	Yes	Yes	Yes
Elizabeth Walraven	Yes	Yes	Yes
Emily Cook	Yes	Yes	Yes
Andrew Frank	Yes	Yes	Yes
Jerilyn Polson	Yes	No (originally voted Yes, but changed vote after Michael Sechler's email)	Yes
Norma Scott	Yes	No (originally voted Yes, but changed vote after Michael Sechler's email)	Yes
Cammy Mays	Yes	Yes	Yes
Susan Catlett	Yes	Yes	Yes
Michael Sechler	No	No	Yes
Melissa Davis	Yes	Yes	Yes

Michael Sechler's Dissent email:

1. Scholarship Eligibility Proposed Change (Yes or No)

NO: I myself experienced institutionally caused bureaucratic delays at the university to which I had applied for my MLS program. I needed to inquire several times about the status of my application: I was quickly approaching the school's deadline for enrollment in summer classes, and although I had applied by the school's application deadline in order to be eligible for summer enrollment, the admissions committee still had not worked through all the pending

applications. This experience has made me very sensitive to the needs of potential students and how they often get stuck when the institutions themselves are not operating by their timeframes as envisioned. I also work in academia, and I can certainly attest to the very real existence of “unforeseen delays” caused by the inner bureaucracies of an institution.

2. Language clarification on the Scholarship application and on the scholarship web page to clarify eligible graduate degrees (Yes or No)

NO: I think the wording should rather be changed in a different way. As one of my instructor's pointed out in my MLS program, it is actually the degree program, not the institution, that is accredited by the ALA. My understanding of the ALA's own web page reaffirms this; specifically, “Some institutions offer more than one information- or library-related degree, but not all degree programs are accredited by the ALA. Only those specific master's degree programs that have been reviewed and approved by the Committee on Accreditation are considered to be ALA-accredited” (https://urldefense.proofpoint.com/v2/url?u=http-3A__www.ala.org_educationcareers_accreditedprograms_faq-23degree-5Fname-5Fdifferences&d=DwIGaQ&c=lcBYif_cfZSUSYtMhoiWrw&r=kBvvM7uj4Ero0Rw2tu-dr155dkSqsGzXFr8wzlaCKTY&m=rozpCX2VRCo319-xYZqfK2fbaeGBEPwqd14dmnJdv9A&s=sTxCxwIw8_EDBjvrnvghUj97EkNmFdM0QMfpEf98-c&e=)). I would suggest that, instead of the proposed addition of specific types of master's degrees, we would instead simplify the wording to more accurately reflect the ALA accreditation. For example, I prefer wording as simple as “Acceptance by or currently enrolled in an American Library Association accredited master's degree program.”